The Second Shepherds' Play

Translated into Modern English by Natasha Luepke

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Smashwords Edition

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Introduction

The popularity of media such as *The Tudors, The Borgias, Camelot, A Game of Thrones, The Other Boleyn Girl,* and *The Pillars of the Earth* shows that Americans are attracted to the past and its pageantry. Shakespeare is still an important cultural presence. Seamus Heaney's translation of *Beowulf* became a best-seller. Even the popular computer game series *The Sims* has released a medieval version.

Middle English can be a barrier between the modern reader and entertaining stories from the past. Medieval English plays revel in spectacle and epic storytelling. However, it is very difficult to find complete Modern English translations of many Old and Middle English texts. For that reason, a new edition of these plays, in Modern English, is needed. A modern prose version of The Wakefield Second Shepherds' Play is a natural introduction to medieval plays.

The plot itself is easy to understand yet complex in language and characterization. The story centers on Mak, a peasant. After Mak steals a sheep from local shepherds Coll, Gib, and Daw, he brings it home to his wife, Gill. Gill disguises the sheep as a baby. When the shepherds arrive, they are nearly taken in by the deception. As they leave, the shepherds realize they have been tricked, and forcefully retrieve their sheep. Afterwards, they are visited by an angel who announces the birth of Jesus. The play ends with the shepherds visiting Jesus and Mary in Bethlehem. What appeared to be a comedy to a modern audience is actually a nativity play.

The events of the play, while very much tied to the medieval world, are still relevant to a modern audience. The Shepherds complain about having to work hard for little pay. Coll wonders about the weather, Gibb bemoans the state of being married, and Daw ponders the marvels of the world. Mak is a trickster, but that is not his only defining characteristic: he is also a poor man, and concerned about caring for his family (though he, like the shepherds, is often heard complaining). Mak's wife, Gill, is witty and resourceful, and is not a passive damsel in distress.

A prose translation allows for clarity not always easily achieved in poetic translations. The original play is written in rhyme, but trying to update the play and keep the rhyme scheme often results in tortured phrasing or using imprecise words. Many medieval words no longer exist in modern English, hence substituting them for something a modern audience would understand provides clarity.

The Second Shepherds' Play is part of the Wakefield Cycle of mystery plays. Mystery plays depict important events from the Bible, essentially depicting the history of the world from its creation to its end. Unfortunately, lately is known about the author of the play,the Wakefield Master, including who he or she was and when he or she was writing.

The play would have been presented by a local guild and performed upon a pageant wagon. Mystery plays were performed continuously over a few days in the summer. Wagons would move from station to station, or spectators

would.

Cast

Coll: The first shepherd, an old man

Gib: The second shepherd, a middle aged man

Daw: the third shepherd, a young man

Mak: a peasant and scoundrel

Gyll: Mak's resourceful wife

An Angel

The Virgin Mary

The Infant Jesus

Setting: A moor; Mak's house; Bethlehem

Scene 1

[A moor. Coll enters.]

Coll: Lord, the weather is so cold, and I am badly dressed. I am nearly numb. I have napped for so long that my legs fold and my fingers are chapped. This is not how I want life to be; I am covered in sorrow. In storms and tempests, now in the East, now in the West, woe is he that has no rest, neither midday nor morning!

But we simple shepherds who walk on the moor, in faith we are nearly out of the door. No wonder that it stands that we are poor: the tilling of our lands lies as fallow as the floor, as you know. We are so hemmed, taxed, and rammed that we are made hand-tamed by these gentlemen. Thus they rob us of our rest, our lady make them wary! These men that are bound to a lord, they cause the plow to slow. What those men say is the best, we find is wrong. Thus are shepherds, farmers, and peasants oppressed, in point to miscarry on life. Thus they hold us under, thus they make us blunder. It is a great wonder that we should ever thrive.

Now-a-days, once a man gets a token like a painted sleeve or a brooch, woeful is the person that gives him grief or says anything against him! No one dares to reprieve him, whoever his master may be, and yet may no one believe one word that he says, not a letter. He can purvey, with boasting and bragging, and all because of the support of men that are greater.

There shall come a young man, as proud as a peacock, who must borrow my wagon and also my plow. I must gladly grant him this before he goes. So we live in pain, anger, and woe by night and by day. He must have it if he likes is and if I should forgo it, I might as well be hanged rather than once tell him no.

It does me good, as I walk by myself, to talk about this world in a manner of moaning. To my sheep I will stalk and call on. Soon, I will sit on a ridge or sit on a stone. For I trust, by God, true men, if they may be, will add to our company before it is noon.

[Gib enters]

Gib: Benste and dominus! What does this mean? Why is the world this way, and in ways we have not seen before? Lord, this weather is spiteful and sharp. The frosts are so hideous that they make my eyes

water, no lie. Now in dry, now in wet, now in snow, now in sleet, it's not an easy life when my shoes freeze to my feet.

But as far as I know, or yet as I go, we married men suffer much woe. We have sorrow then and then, it often is so. Simple Capyle, our hen, cackles as she walks both to and fro. But when she begins to croak, groan, or cluck, woe to our rooster, for then is he in shackles.

These men that are married, they do not have their full will. When they are in a painful position, they just sigh continually. God knows they are led, both hard and bad, and in neither bower nor bed do they get to say what they want, at any time. For my part, I have fun. I know my lesson. Woe is him that is bound, because he must abide.

But now, late in our lives, appears a marvel to me, that I think my heart breaks at such wonders to see. What that destiny commands should be. Some men will have two wives in store, and some men three. Some are sorry that have just one. But as far as I can tell, woe is him that has many, for he feels sorrow.

But young men of wooing, for the God that bought you, be very wary of wedding. Think to yourself that "Had I known" is a thing that does nothing. Much mourning has a wedding brought home, and grief, with many a sharp sorrow. For you can catch in an hour that shall sow the full sorrow as long as you live.

As ever I read Epistles, I have one by my fire. She is as sharp as a thistle and as rough as a briar. She has a brow like a bristle, and with a sour face. Once she has wet her whistle, she can sing full clear her Pater Noster. She is as great as a whale and has a gallon of gall. By him that died for us all, I wish I had run until I'd lost her.

Coll: God look over all of you! You stand deafly.

Gib: Yes, the devil in your maw, for delaying. Have you seen anything of Daw?

Coll: Yes, on some open land. I heard him blow. He comes here at hand. Not far. Stand still.

Gib: Why?

Coll: Because he comes, I hope.

Gib: But he will lie to us both if we are not wary.

[Daw enters]

Daw: Christ's cross my luck, and Saint Nicholas! I have need, it is worse than it was before. Who could take heed and let the world pass? It is ever in dread and as brittle as glass, and goes away. This world never fared so before, but now has more and more marvels: now in

health, now in sadness, and all things turn.

Never since Noah's flood have such storms been seen. Winds and rains so rude and storms so keen. Some stammered, some stood in doubt I speculate. Now God turn all to good! I say as I mean to think about. These floods, they drown both in fields and in town and push it all down. And that is a wonder.

We that walk the nights, to keep our cattle, we see so many sights when other men sleep. But I think my heart is light. I see some rascals peeping. You are two monsters; I will turn my sheep away.

But bad things have I meant, as I walk on this bent. I may lightly repent my toes if I spurn you.

Ah, sir, God save you and my master! A drink would I have, and something to eat.

Coll: Christ's curse, my knave, you are a lazy peasant.

Gib: What! The boy does rave. Wait until later. Bad luck on your head! Though the rascal came late, yet he is in a state to dine, if he had food.

Daw: Such servants as I, that sweat and work, eat our bread dry, and I do not like that. We are often wet and weary when the masters sleep. Yet both dinner and drinks come late. But certainly, both our dame and sire, even when we have run in the mud, can reduce our wages and pay us late.

But hear my truth, master, for the fare that you make I shall do thereafter, work as I take. I shall do little, sir, and play in between. For when I am in the fields, my supper is never in my stomach. Why should I strive? With my staff I can leap, and men say "That which is gotten easily repays poorly."

Coll: You are a bad lad, to go on about wooing, to a man that had few opportunities.

Gib: Peace boy, I bid you, no more prattling. Or I shall make you stop, by the heaven's king! With all of your jokes, where are our sheep, boy? Enough mockery.

Daw: Sir, this same morning I left them in the corn when the bell rang for Lauds. They have good pasture and cannot go wrong.

Coll: That is right, by the cross! These nights are long. Yet I would, before we go, have a song.

Gib: So thought I as I stood here, to make us happy.

Daw: I grant.

Coll: Let me sing the tenor.

Gib: And I the treble so high.

Daw: Then the main falls to me. Let us see how you chant.

[They sing.]

Scene 2

[Mak enters, wearing a cloak.]

Mak: Now, Lord, by your seven names, who made both the moon and the stars, well more than I can name, let me know your will. I am all uneven, and my brains are overworked. Now, God, I wish I were in heaven, because no babies constantly cry there.

Coll: Who is it that sings so poorly?

Mak [speaking in a southern accent]: God knows how I fair: a man that walks on the moor and does not have his own will.

Gib: Mak, where have you been? Tell us everything.

Daw: Is he come? Than watch your things.

[Daw takes Mak's cloak.]

Mak: What? I am a yeoman, I tell you, a yeoman of the king! The self and same, sent from a great lord and such. Fie on you! Go away, out of my presence. I must have reverence. Who am I?

Coll: Why are you trying to trick? Mak, you do us wrong.

Gib: But Mak, do you want to be a saint? I trust that you long to.

Daw: I trust the rascal can pretend, the devil might hang him!

Mak: I shall make a complaint and make you all be flogged at a word. And even tell about what you did.

Coll: But, Mak, is that so? Now take out that southern tone and set it in a turd!

Gib: Mak, the devil in your eye, I would hit you.

Daw: Mak, don't you know me? By God I could hurt you.

Mak [speaks normally]: God, look at all three of you! I thought I'd seen you. You are a fair company.

Coll: Are you yourself again?

Gib: Rascal, trickery! You are out so late, what will men think? And you have a bad reputation for sheep stealing.

Mak: I am as true as steel, all men know that. But a sickness I feel, that has seized me violently and hotly. My belly is not well, it is out of sorts.

Daw: Seldom is the devil actually dead by the gate.

Mak: Therefore, I feel so sickly even if I stand still, I have not eaten even a nettle for over a month.

Coll: How is your wife? By my hood, how is she?

Mak: By the cross, she lies wailing by the fire. And we have a house full of kids, but she drinks so. Bad luck to all that she does! She eats as fast as she can. And every year, she brings forth a baby. And some years, two.

Even if I had more grace and money, I would be eaten out of house and harbor. Yet she is a filthy harlot, if you want to know the truth. There is none that has it worse than I do.

Will you see what I have in my coffer to offer tomorrow morning? A penny for her death mass.

Gib: Well, I know no one is as weary from walking in this shire as I. I will sleep even if I receive less money.

Daw: I am cold and poorly dressed, and wish I had a fire.

Coll: I am weary, tired from walking, and run in the mud. Wake up, you!

Gib: No, I will lie down, for truly I must sleep.

Daw: I am as good a man's son as any of you. But Mak, come here! Between us you shall lie down.

Mak: Then I might truly hinder you, of what you would whisper, no doubt. From my top to my toes, Manus tuas commendo poncio pilato. By Christ's cross, give me luck.

[The Shepherds and Mak lay down. Once the shepherds are asleep, Mak gets up.]

Mak: Now is the time for a man that does as he wants to stalk stealthily onto a fold. And nimbly to work, but not be too bold, for he might pay dearly for this bargain, if it were told at the end. Now is the time to act quickly. But he needs good counsel who would fare well, and has but little spending.

But around you a magic circle, as round as the moon, till I have done what I will. Until it is noon, you will lay stone still until I have finished. And I shall say a few good words: "On high, over your heads I lift my hands. Out go your eyes, forgo your sight." But yet I must make better arrangements, if it is to be.

Lord! They are sleeping soundly. You might as well hear this. I was never a shepherd, but I will learn. The flock might be scared, but I will go near. What! He comes near. Now I am feeling better. A fat sheep I daresay. A good fleece dare I lay. To repay, when I may. But this I will borrow.

[Mak steels a lamb, and takes it to his home.]

Scene 3

[Mak's house]

Mak: Hello, Gill, are you in? Get us some light.

Gill: Who makes such a noise this time of night? I am all set for spinning. I hoped I wouldn't have to get up so that I could earn a penny. I curse them on high! So fares a housewife that has been put in the middle: No real work can be done because of all the small chores.

Mak: Good wife, open the door! Don't you see what I've brought with me?

Gill: I may let you draw the hatch. Ah, come in my sweeting!

Mak: Yes, don't worry about how long I've been standing here.

Gill: By your naked neck are you likely to hang.

Mak: Oh please, I am worthy of my meat. For in a straight can I get more than they that work and sweat all the long day. Thus it fell to my lot. Gill, I had such grace.

Gill: It would be a fowl blot to be hanged for the case.

Mak: I have often escaped, Gilly, from hard blows before.

Gill: But as long as the pot goes to the water, men say, finally it comes home broken.

Mak: Well know I that token. But let it never be spoken. Come and help me quickly. I would like to flay the sheep, and even more I would like it to eat. I have not had one piece of sheep meat over the last twelve months.

Gill: But if the come before he is slain, and the sheep bleat….

Mak: Then might I be taken. That's a cold sweat! Go close the gate door.

Gill: Yes Mak. Because if they come from the back…..

Mak: Then might I receive a devil of a bad time.

Gill: I have spied a good board, since you can't see it. Here shall we hide him until they are gone, in my cradle. Let me alone, and I shall lay beside it as if in childbed, and groan.

Mak: Get ready. And I shall say you were delivered of a boy child this night.

Gill: Now happy is the day that I was born. This is a good disguise and a clever trick. Yet a woman's advice helps at last. I don't know who is watching, so return to the shepherds quickly.

Mak: Unless I return before they wake, it will be a cold blast. I will go sleep.

Scene 4

[Mak returns to the shepherds but goes to "sleep" in a different place than

before. Sometime after that, the shepherds begin to stir.]

Mak: Yet they still sleep, and I shall act as if it had not been I that carried off their sheep.

Coll: Resurrex a mortruis! Take ahold of my hand. Judas carnas dominus! I do not stand well. My foot is asleep, by Jesus, and I stagger from fasting. I thought that we lay near England.

Gib: Ah! Lord! I have slept well. As fresh as an eel! I feel as light as a leaf on a tree.

Daw: Blessings be here! So my heart quakes. My heart is out of its skin because of this. Who makes all this noise? So my brows blacken. I will head to the door. Hark fellows, awake! We were four. Do you know where Mak is?

Coll: We were up before you.

Gib: Man, I vow to God he didn't go anywhere.

Daw: I thought he was dressed in a wolf skin.

Coll: So are many clothed, but namely within.

Gib: When we had long slept, I thought Mak used a trick to trap a fat sheep even though he made no noise.

Daw: Be still. Your dream makes you crazy. It is but a phantom, by the cross.

Coll: Now God turn all to good if it is his will.

[The shepherds finally find Mak.]

Gib: Rise, Mak, for shame! You have lain there a long time.

Mak: Now Christ's holy name be among us. What is this? For Saint James, I may not well go. I trust I am the same. Ah, my neck has lain wrong. Many thanks. Since yesterday evening, now, by Saint Strevyn, I was scared by a dream, and my heart is out of its skin.

I thought Gill began to croak and suffer. At the first cock crow, a young lad was added to our flock. Now I will never be happy. I already have enough trouble. Ah, my head!

A house full of young children. The devil knock out their brains! Woe is him that has too many babies and too little bread.

I must go home, by your leave, to Gill. I pray you, look in my sleeve. See that I haven't stolen anything. I do not want to grieve you, or take anything from you.

Daw: Go forth, and may you never prosper. [Mak leaves.] Now I would like for this morning to check that we have everything.

Coll: I will go first. Let us meet later.

Gib: Where?

Daw: At the Crooked Thorn.

Scene 5

[Mak's house]

Mak: Undo this door! Who is here? How long shall I stand here?

Gill: Who makes such a noise? Go walk in the waning moon light.

Mak: Ah, Gill, what's this? It is I, Mak, your husband.

Gill: Then may we see here the devil in a band, Sir Gyle. Lo, he comes with a noise. As if he were held in the throat. I may not sit at my work even a little while.

Mak: Will you hear the noise she makes, just so she can get out of doing something? And yet she does nothing but be critical and pluck at her toes.

Gill: Why, who wanders, who wakes, who comes, who goes? Who brews, who bakes? What makes me so hoarse? And then, it is a pity to behold, now in hot, now in cold, how sad is the household that lacks a woman.

But what end have you made with the herders, Mak?

Mak: The last word that they said, when I turned my back, was that they would look that they had all of their sheep in their pack. I bet they will not be well repaid when they see they are missing a sheep, by God.

But how so the game goes, to me they will suppose, and make a foul noise and cry out upon me. But you must do as you promised.

Gill: I accord me there. I shall swaddle him right in my cradle. Even if it was a greater trick, yet I would help. I will lie down right away. Come help me.

Mak: I will.

Gill: Behind comes Coll and his mates. They will trap us tightly.

Mak: But I may cry out "help!" if they find the sheep.

Gill: Hark you when they call, the will come soon. Come and make everything ready, and sing by yourself. You will sing "lullay" because I must groan and cry out by the wall, on Mary and John, in pain.

Sing "lullay" quickly when you hear them at last. And since I play a false part, trust me no more.

Scene 6

[The shepherds on the moor.]

Daw: Ah, Coll, good morning. Why didn't you sleep?

Coll: Alas that ever I was born! We have a foul blot. A fat young sheep we have lost.

Daw: Mary, God forbid!

Gib: Who should do that to us? That is a foul spot.

Coll: Some rascal. I have sought with my dogs, all through Horbery's bushes. And of fifteen young sheep, I found just one ewe.

Daw: Now trust me, if you will, but Saint Thomas of Kent, either Mak or Gill was a participant.

Coll: Peace man, be still! I saw when he left. You slander him. You ought to repent quickly.

Gib: Now if I ever I should prosper, if ever I should die, I would say that it were he that did this same deed.

Daw: Go we there, I counsel, running on our feet. I will never eat bread until I know the truth.

Coll: Nor will I drink until him I meet.

Gib: I will rest in no place till I greet him. My brothers, one thing I promise: Till I have him in sight shall I never sleep another night.

[The shepherds arrive at Mak's house. Gill can be heard groaning.]

Daw: Will you hear how they cry? Our sire likes to croon.

Coll: I have never heard one crack so clearly out of tone. Call on him.

Gib: Mak! Undo your door now!

Mak: Who is it that speaks as if it were noon on high? Who is it, I say?

Daw: Good fellows, I wish it were day.

Mak: As far as you may, good men, speak softly over a sick woman's head. I would rather be dead than she have a disease.

Gill: Go to some other house. I may not well breathe. Each foot that treads goes through my nose. So go!

Coll: Tell us, Mak, if you can, how fares you?

Mak: But are you in town today? Now how fares you? You have run in the mud and are wet still. I shall make you a fire, if you will sit. A nurse would I hire. Do you remember my dream? This is it, at least for a while. I have babies, as you know, well more than enough. But we must drink as we brew, and that is only logical.

I wish that you would eat before you go, I think that you sweat.

Gib: No, nothing mends our mood, neither drink for food.

Mak: Why, sir, are you anything but good?

Daw: Yes, our sheep are stolen as they walk. Our loss is great.

Mak: Sirs, drink! Had I been there, the thief would have gotten a beating.

Coll: By Mary, some men think that you were there. And that is what we think.

Gib: Mak, some men think that it was you.

Daw: Either you or your spouse, so say we.

Mak: Now if you suspect Gill or me, come and search our house, and then you'll see who had it. Just see if I have any sheep feet, either female or male. And Gill, my wife, hasn't risen since she laid down here. As I am true and loyal, to God here I pray, that this be the first meal that I eat this day.

Coll: Mak, as I have blessings, I give you this advice: he learned to steal who could not say no.

[The shepherds search the house.]

Gill: I swoon! Out, thieves, from my house! You come to rob us on purpose!

Mak: Don't you hear how she groans? Your hearts should melt.

Gill: Out, thieves, awat from my baby. Don't come here or go there!

Mak: If you knew how she had fared, your hearts would be sore. You do wrong, I warn you, to thus come before to a woman that has so labored. But I say no more.

Gill: Ahh, my middle! I pray to God so mild, if ever I you beguiled, that I eat this child, that lies in the cradle.

Mak: Peace, woman, for God's pain, and cry not so. You spill your brains and make me full of woe.

Gib: I trust our sheep is slain. What did you two find?

Daw: We work in vain. We may as well go. By God's clothing, I can find no flesh, hard nor soft, salt nor fresh. Just two empty platters.

Living cattle, only this, tame or wild. None, as I have blessings, smell as badly as he does.

Gill: No, so God me bless, and give me joy of my child.

Coll: We have marked amiss, I hold us tricked.

Gib: Sir done. Sir, our lady save him! Is your child a boy?

Mak: Any lord might have this child for his son. When he is awake, he snatches at things, and that is a joy to see.

Daw: In good time to his happiness, and in celebration. But who were his godparents, ready so quickly?

Mak: So bless their beautiful lips!

Coll: Hark now, a lie!

Mak: So God thank them, Parkyn, and Gilbert Waller, I say, and gentle John Horn, in good faith. He made all the commotion with his long legs.

Gib: Mak, friends will we be, for we are all one.

Mak: We! No I look after myself. I have not gotten any reparations. Fare well all three!

[The Shepherds leave.]

Mak: I'm glad you are gone.

Daw: Fair words may there be but love is there none this year.

Coll: Gave you the child anything?

Gib: I think not one farthing.

Daw: Quickly I will return.

[The Shepherds return]

Daw: Mak, do not take it badly that I come to your baby.

Mak: No, you have rebuked me, and badly have you done.

Daw: It will not grieve the child, that little day star. Mak, with your leave let me just give your baby six pence.

Mak: No, go away, he is sleeping.

Daw: I think he wakes.

Mak: When he wakes, he cries. I pray you go hence.

Daw: Give me leave to kiss him, and lift up the blankets. What the devil is this? He has a long snout!

Coll: He is marked amiss! We shouldn't have been prying.

Gib: Badly woven fabric soon unravels. Ah! He looks like our sheep!

Daw: How, Gib, may I see?

Coll: I think nature will creep in where it shouldn't go.

Gib: This was a strange trick. It was high fraud.

Daw: Yes, sirs, it was. Let's burn this bawd, and bind her fast. A false scold

hangs at last. So shall you. Will you see how they swaddled his four feet in the middle? I never saw a horned lad in a cradle before now.

Mak: Peace bid I: What! Stop your searching. I am the father and yon woman bore him.

Coll: What shall the devil be called, Mak? Lo, God, Mak's heir!

Gib: Let be all that, now God give him care, I say.

Gill: A pretty child is he, as sits on a woman's knee. A darling, to make a man laugh.

Daw: I know him by the ear mark. That is a good sign.

Mak: I tell you sirs, hark! His nose was broken. Afterward a clerk told me he was bewitched.

Coll: This is false work; I would like to be revenged. Get weapons.

Gill: He was taken by an elf, I saw it myself. When the clock struck twelve was he misshapen.

Gib: You are two of a kind, and fit to share the same house.

Daw: Since they maintain their theft, let's kill them.

Mak: If I trespass again, sever my head. With you will I be left.

Coll: Sirs, follow my advice. For this trespass we will neither curse nor quarrel, fight nor chide. Instead, finish it quickly and cast them in canvas.

[The shepherds capture Mak and Gill and cover them in fabric. They then leave and return to their meadow.]

Scene 7

Coll: Lord! What I am sore and likely to burst. In faith, I will do no more, therefore will I rest.

Gib: Mak weighed as much as a sheep of sevenscore in my fist. I would like to sleep somewhere, anywhere.

Daw: Now I pray you, lay down on the green.

Coll: On these thieves yet I still think.

Daw: Why should you still suffer? Do as I say.

[An angel appears, with song "Glory to God on Highest."]

Angel: Rise noble herd men! For now is he born that shall take from the fiend what Adam had lost. This night is he born who will destroy that warlock. God is made your friend now this morning. He requests, at Bethlehem go see: There lies that noble one in a poor crib, lying between two beasts.

[Angel leaves.]

Coll: This was the strangest voice that I've ever heard. It is a marvel to speak of, thus to be scared.

Gib: Of God's son of heaven he spoke on high. I thought he made it appear that all the woods were lit up with a flash of light.

Daw: He spoke of a baby in Bethlehem, I tell you.

Coll: That is the meaning of yonder star. Let us seek him there.

Gib: Say, what was his song? Didn't you hear how he sang it? Three breaths to a long.

Daw: Yes, by Mary, he broke it into many small notes. Was no note wrong, nor did it lack anything.

Coll: We should sing it. I can trill it as well as he did.

Gib: Let's see how you croon. Can you bark at the moon?

Daw: Hold your tongue! Enough!

Coll: Hark after, then.

Gib: To Bethlehem, he bade, that we should go. I am very afraid that we tarry too long.

Daw: Be merry and not sad, of mirth is our song. Everlasting joy is our reward. We will not be harmed.

Coll: Let's get there quickly to that child and that lady, even if we are wet and weary. We can't forget it!

Gib: We find by the prophecy, let be your din, of David and Isaiah and more than I know, that prophesied by clergy that in a virgin should he lay to slacken our sin and remove it. Our kind from woe for Isaiah said so: Cite virgo. Concipiet a child that is naked.

Daw: Full glad may we be and wait for that day to see that lovely and mighty one. Lord, I am well, for once and for always. Might I kneel on my knee, and say some words to the child. But the angel said in a crib was he laid, he was poorly arrayed both poor and mild.

Coll: Patriarchs that have been and prophets before, they desired to have seen this child that is born. They are all gone and have lost that chance. We shall see him, I think, before it is morning. When I see and feel him, then I will know that it is as true as steel that prophets have spoken to so poor as we are that he would appear, first find, and declare by his messenger.

Gib: Go we now, let us fare, the place is near.

Daw: I am ready and prepared, go we all together to that bright one. Lord, let it be your will that men as poor as we three can comfort this child.

Scene 8

[The Shepherds arrive in Bethlehem. They approach Mary and Jesus.]

Coll: Hail, handsome and pure! Hail, young child! Hail, Maker as I mean, of a maiden so mild. You have cursed, I think, the warlock so wild. That false trickster of evil, now he is tricked

Lo, he is merry, lo, he laughs, my sweeting. A welfare meeting. I have kept my promise. Have a bob of cherries.

Gib: Hail, suffering savior! For you have we sought. Hail, noble young child and flower that all things has wrought. Hail, full of favor that made all from nothing. Hail! I kneel and cower. A bird have I brought to my baby. Hail little tiny bundle! Of our kind, you are perfection. I would drink from your cup, little day star.

Daw: Little darling dear, full of godhead! I pray you be near when that I have need. Hail! Sweet is your face! My heart would bleed to see you sit here in so poor clothing with no pennies. Hail! Put forth your hand! I bring you only a ball. Have it and play with it, and take it to tennis.

Mary: The father of heaven, God omnipotent, that made all in seven days, has sent his son. He named my name, and alighted in me before he left. I conceived him through God's will, as he intended. And now is he born. May he keep you from woe! I shall pray that he do so. Spread the word as you go, and think on this morning.

Coll: Farewell, lady, so beautiful to behold with your child on your knee.

Gib: But he lays there, cold. Lord, well is me. Now we go, you see.

Daw: Forsooth, all ready, it seems to be told often.

Coll: What grace we have found.

Gib: Come forth, now we are won.

Daw: To sing are we bound. Let's sing up high!

[Shepherds exit.]

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